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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Pastor Rickey Blythe, from the First Baptist Church of Flora, in Flora, MS.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Our Father in Heaven, Thou Who art loving, compassionate, merciful, patient, and gracious to forgive, we desire to acknowledge You in all our ways, that You may direct our steps. Especially do we need You in the great moments of life. Graciously regard these Your servants. We acknowledge that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." May we desire character more than reputation, truth more than expediency, and honesty more than vanity. Help us to be the good Samaritan ready to help all in need regardless of race, face, or place. We pray that we may learn the peace that comes with forgiving and the strength we gain in loving. Let righteousness, justice, and mercy be carried along on the current of Thy love, mercy, and truth.

The men and women of this august body of elected officials carry a tremendous responsibility, and the sense of that responsibility is with them every day. We ask on their behalf that You would strengthen each one as they faithfully serve this great Republic in which we live. It has been a long week for most, and still there is more work to do. Grant unto these our Senators that they may find joy in the task. As the unseen guest of all these proceedings, may You light their way. At the end of the day, grant that we may live not in despair but, rather, in a desire for a better America, which will be brought to fruition not by our words but by our deeds.

We ask it in the Name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 21, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SUNUNU thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning, we will have 60 minutes of debate prior to the cloture vote on the nomination of Thomas Dorr to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development. This is a nomination we have tried to clear for quite some time but were unable to do so because of an

objection on the other side of the aisle. On Tuesday, I filed a cloture motion so we could bring this nomination to a vote. I do hope we can invoke cloture and subsequently vote affirmatively, with an up-or-down vote, on the President's nomination.

Once cloture is invoked and we are able to vote on the Dorr nomination—once we complete that—we will resume debate on the Defense authorization bill. Chairman WARNER and Senator LEVIN were on the Senate floor yesterday to consider amendments. There is one amendment pending at this point in time. I understand the other side is looking at that amendment. It is an amendment relating to armored personnel carriers. We will schedule that for a vote sometime early today, I hope.

We will be considering additional amendments over the course of today. We, of course, will be voting over the course of the afternoon on the Department of Defense authorization bill. We do need to make substantial progress on the bill this week. Therefore, we do ask Senators to come forward with their amendments.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today marks the 75th anniversary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On July 21, 1930, by Executive order, President Herbert Hoover consolidated our veterans programs into a new Federal agency. In the decades since, the Department has grown to become the second largest Federal agency. In 1989, its director was elevated to a Cabinet-level position. Today, the agency serves more than 25 million American military veterans.

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers the most comprehensive veterans assistance programs of any country in the world. Since the very first

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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